Social Rules in Islam

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With Whom Should I Socialize?

Friday Sermon, 14 Nov. 2008

Introduction

Do we really choose a friend, or is compatibility the magnet of friendship?

Many narrations confirm that every person is attracted to one like himself

كل امرء يميل الى مثله

or every bird nests with its type.

How do we choose a friend?

1) We pay attention to our comfort level when we're with a person. For example, we befriend people who encourage us, not those who are pessimistic, or always bombard us with negative comments or criticism, or ask us to do things we don't like.

2) We don't choose a friend who holds a different opinion than us. We usually befriend people who always agree with us and accept us 'for what I am'!

Islamic Recommendation of choosing a friend

1. You must be selective: you can often guarantee your success by having top quality people around

you.

النبی)ص): انظروا من تحادثون، فان`ه ليس من احد ينزل به الموت الا` مث`ل له اصحابه الى الله. فان كانوا خيارا فخيارا، و ان كانوا شرارا فشرارا، و ليس احد يموت الا` تمثُلت له عند موته. ـ الكافى 2:466

The Prophet of Islam (S): “Be selective of those with whom you communicate, for there is none who dies but his friends will resemble him on his way to Allah. Then if they were good people the resemblance will be good, but if they were evil people, it will be evil. And none dies but I appear to him at the time of his death.”1

2. Socialize with those who increase your faith

عن ابن عباس قال: قيل يا رسول الله اى الجلساء خير؟ قال: من تُذک`ركم اللهَ رؤيتُه، ويزيدُ فى علمكم منطقُه، و يرغ`بكم فى الآخرة عملُه. ـ وسائل الشيعة 12:23

Ibn ‘Abbas asked: O Messenger of Allah! What type of friends are the best? The Prophet (S) replied: “Those who seeing them reminds you of Allah, and their talk increases your knowledge, and their actions encourage you for the hereafter.2

الامام على (ع): من دعاک الى الدار الباقية و اعانک على العمل لها، فهو الصديق الشفيق. ـ غرر الحكم 8775

Imam ‘Ali (a.s) said: “Whoever invites you to the lasting abode and assists you to act for it, he is your sincere friend. 3

3. Socialize with benevolent people

الامام على (ع): قارن اهل الخير تكن منهم و باين اهل الشر` تبن عنهم. ـ نهج البلاغة ـ الكتاب 31

Imam ‘Ali (a.s): “Be close to benevolent people, you will be one of them, and stay aloof from people of evil, you will be away from evil. 4

4. Socialize with the one who doesn’t get angry with you easily:

الامام الصادق (ع): اذا اردت ان تعلم صح`ة ما عند اخيک فأغضبه، فإن ثبت لک على المود`ة فهو اخوک و الا` فلا. ـ تحف العقول 357

Imam al- Sadiq (a.s): “If you want to know how sincere your friend is, make him upset (i.e. observe him

when he gets upset), then if he stays with you as a friend, he is your mate otherwise not." 5

1. Al-Kafi, 2/466.
2. Wasa'il ush-Shi'a, 12/23.
3. Qarar al-Hikam, 8775
4. Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 31
5. Tuhaf al-Uqool , 357

Pathology of Solitary (Unsociability)

Friday Sermon, 21 Nov. 2008

As much as we need socialization some people have problems socializing with others. They can't make friends or they can't keep a friendship. As a result they develop a very negative attitude towards society. They accuse every one as being disloyal, treacherous and selfish, thus they suffer from anti-social behavior called 'solitariness'. The following are some causes of solitariness.

Some Causes of Solitariness

1. Being argumentative

2. Saying offensive jokes

> الامام الصادق (ع): إن اردت ان يصفو لک ود` اخيک فلاتمازحن`ه و لاتمارين`ه و لاتباهين`ه و لاتشار`ن`ه. ـ بحار الانوار 78:291

Imam al- Sadiq (a.s): "If you wish to keep the friendship of your friend pure, then do not make jokes about him, do not argue with him, do not boast to him and do not do any evil to him so that he doesn't do any evil in return to you. 1

3. Keep a bit of formality

> الامام الكاظم (ع): لاتذهب الحشمة بينک و بين اخيک و أبق منها فان` ذهابها ذهاب الحياء.ـ تحف العقول: 409

Imam al- Kadhem (a.s): "Don't let the formality be removed between you and your friend, rather keep a bit of it, for the removal of complete formality results in removal of shame." 2

4. Hypersensitive (be insensitive as beasts or as patient as prophets)

الامام على (ع): إن صبرتَ صبر الاكارم و الا` سلوتَ سُلُو` البهائم.ـ نهج البلاغة ـ قصار 414

Imam ‘Ali (a.s): “If you can endure the patience of the noble people, or else pretend the heedlessness of the beasts.” 3

5. Picking up any mistakes:

الامام الصادق (ع): الاستقصاء فرقة.ـ بحار الانوار 78:229)

Imam al- Sadiq (a.s): “Counting (the mistakes of a friend) causes separation.” 4

6. The golden advice of Imam al- Sajjad (a.s) to gain a healthy social relationship:

الطبرسى بالإسناد عن ابى محمد العسكرى (ع) عن آبائه أن` محمد بن على الباقر (ع) قال: دخل محمد بن مسلم بن شهاب الزُهرى على على بن الحسين عليهما السلام و هو كئيب حزين. فقال له زين العابدين (ع): ما بالك مغموما؟ قال: يا بن رسول الله! غموم و هموم تتوالى على` لما امتُحنتُ به من جهة حس`اد نعمتى و الطامعين فى`، و ممن ارجو و مم`ن احسنتُ اليه فيُخلف ظن`ى. فقال له على بن الحسين (ع): إحفظ عليك لسانك تملك به إخوانك). قال الزهرى: يا بن رسول الله! انى أُحسن اليهم بما يبدر من كلامى. قال على بن الحسين (ع:

هيهات هيهات! اى`اك أن تُعجب من نفسك بذلك و اى`اك ان تتكلم بما يسبق الى القلوب إنكاره و ان كان عندك اعتذاره، فليس كل من تسمعه نكرا (شر`ا: نسخة) يمكنك أن توسعه عذرا. ثم قال: يا زهرى! من لم يكن عقله من أكمل ما فيه، كان هلاكه من ايسر ما فيه. ثم قال: يا زهرى! أما عليك أن تجعل المسلمين منك بمنزلة اهل بيتك فتجعل كبيرهم منك بمنزلة والدك ، و تجعل صغيرهم منك بمنزلة ولدك، و تجعل تِربك منهم بمنزلة اخيك. فاى` هؤلاء تحب أن تظلم،

و اى` هؤلاء تحب ان تدعو عليه، و اى` هؤلاء تحب ان تهتك ستره؟ و إن عرض لك ابليس لعنه الله بأن` لك فضلا على احد من اهل القبلة، فانظر إن كان اكبر منك فقل: قد سبقنى بالايمان و العمل الصالح فهو خير منى، و ان كنت اكبر منه فقل: قد سبقته بالمعاصى و الذنوب فهو خير منى، و ان كان تربك فقل: انا على يقين من ذنبى و فى شك من امره فما لى ادَع يقينى لشكى.

و إن رأيت المسلمين يعظمونك و يوقرونك و يبجلونك فقل: هذا فضل اَخذوا به، و إن رأيت منهم جفاءً و انقباضا عنك فقل: هذا لذنب احدثتُه، فانك اذا فعلت ذلك سه`ل الله عليك عيشك، و كث`ر اصدقائَك، و قل` اعداءَك و فرحتَ بما يكون من برِ`هم و لم تأسف على ما يكون من جفائهم.

و اعلم ان` اكرم الناس على الناس من كان خيره عليهم فايضا، وكان عنهم مستغنيا متعف`فا، و أكرم الناس بعده

عليهم من كان عنهم متعف`فا و إن كان اليهم محتاجا فانما اهل الدنيا يعشقون الاموال، فمن لم يزاحمهم فيما يعشقونه كرم عليهم، و من لم يزاحمهم فيها و مک`نهم من بعضها كان اعز` عليهم و اكرم.ـ الاحتجاج 2: 158–159

Imam al– Baqir (a.s) said: Muhammad Ibn Muslim Ibn Sehab al–Zohr came to Imam Zainul–Abedin (my father) while he was sad and grieved. Imam Zainul–Abedin asked him: Why are you grieved? He said: O son of the Prophet (S)! Distress and grievances always fall upon me as I have been afflicted by them from those who are jealous and greedy of blessings that I enjoy, and from those that I have hope on them and have been kind to them but they disappoint me.

Imam Zainul–Abedin (a.s) said to him: guard your tongue; you will owe by it to your friends. Zohri said: O son of the Prophet (S): I am kind to them with my tongue. The Imam al– said: How impossible, how impossible! Don't ever be proud of yourself, and don't you ever say something that people's hearts reject it even if you have justifications for it.

O Zohri! Whoever his intellect is not the best in him, his perishing will be the easiest in him. You must consider the Muslims your family, then whoever is older than you consider him as a father (or mother), and whoever is younger than you think of him as a son (or daughter), and whoever is of your age position him (her) as a brother (or sister).

Then which of them would you like to be unfair to? And which one of them would you like to curse? And which one of them would you like to defame? If the Satan–May the curse of Allah be on him– allure you that you are better than other Muslims, then whoever is older than you, say (to yourself): He has exceeded me in faith and righteous deeds, thus he is better than me.

And if you are older than him, then say (to yourself): I exceeded him in sins thus he is better than me. And if he is of your age, then say (to yourself): I am sure about my sins but doubt his, then why should I leave my certainty to my doubt.

Moreover, if you see that Muslims admire and honour you then say (to yourself): This is a virtue that they enjoy. And if you experience any aversion and resentment from them, then say (to yourself): This is due to the sins that I have committed.

If you follow what I have told you, then the Almighty Allah will ease your life, multiply your friends, reduce your foes and you will be pleased when they are kind to you, but will not feel sorry from their resentment.

Be aware that the most honourable person to people is the one whose benefits shower on them, yet he is modest and needless of them. And the most honourable person after him is the one who is modest although he may need them. For people of this world love their wealth, thus they love whoever is not competing them in what they love, and whoever does not compete them and let them enjoy part of their wealth they will honour and respect him." [5]

1. Bihar al-Anwar, 78:291
2. Tuhaf al-Uqool , 409
3. Nahj ul Balaghah, sermon 414
4. Bihar al Anwar
5. al-Tabarsi; al-Ihtijaj vol.2 p.158

Desensitization

Friday Sermon, 5 Dec. 2008

One of the common problems of social life is the sensitivity that many of us have against people's comments or attitudes towards us. Suppose you have a very abrupt classmate who makes sharp comments on your personal issues. How can we deal with people around us whose comments hurt?

1. Revenge: one of the most common reactions to hurtful comments is to get them back. Tit for tat. Spite doesn't solve the problem, it worsens it.

2. Ignore it: Imam 'Ali (a.s) says:

ان صبرتَ صبر الاكارم و الا` سلوت سلو` البهائم.ـ نهج البلاغة

"If (could) endure the patience of noble people, otherwise pretend the heedlessness of the beasts."

Although ignoring often works, there is a limit to which you can ignore the person. Once it hits the threshold you blow up and may react with a severe revenge.

3. Desensitization. In medicine there is a method to reduce or eliminate an organism's negative reaction to a substance or stimulus. This method is called desensitization. For example, if a person with diabetes mellitus has a bad allergic reaction to take a full dose of beef insulin; his doctor gives him a very small amount of the insulin at first.

Over a period of time, larger doses are given until the person is taking the full dose. Vaccination is another form of desensitization. Therefore, desensitization is the technique of making an organism less sensitive.

Desensitization is a cognitive therapy. Most of mental pains or pleasures have in fact internal causes. The best way to deal with people's unpleasant comments is to desensitize yourself against their comments. The following are some methods of desensitization:

A) Be optimistic: Most people are not sadists and don't have any evil intentions for what they say or do.

It is often our assumption that brands a speech or attitude negative. For instance, a mother whose daughter has been sick for quite a long time had become sensitive to people repeatedly asking her about her daughter. As a result she went into isolation.

In a short consultation she managed to realise that people's inquiries are in fact a sign of their concern to pray for her or offer any assistance. Of course, often people don't have the best choice of words to express their concern in the manner, but rest assured that they are sincere. Thus, we should judge them for their good intention. For this reason negative assumption is considered a mortal sin in Islam. The Almighty Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

"O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions (***negative assumptions***) ***are sins…."*** (***the Holy Qur'an 49:12***)

B) Justification: We must understand that people's behaviour is the effect of many factors. The healthy way to deal with people's attitude is to endeavour to find justification for it. Imam al- Sadiq (a.s) said:

اطلب لأخيک عذرا فان لم تجد له عذرا فالتمس له عذرا.ـ بحار الانوار 75:197

"Seek an excuse for your brother (friend), and if you couldn't find any excuse for him, seek an excuse (from someone else) for him." 1

C) Compliance (with someone's mood): the bottom line is that we are not living in Paradise. As people look different, they also think and behave differently. We cannot possibly expect everyone to behave the way we are pleased with. Thus, it is very much recommended in Islam to comply with them as much as possible. It is narrated from the holy Prophet of Islam (S) to have said:

امرنی ربی بمداراة الناس کما امرنی بالفرائض. ـالکافی 2:96

"My Lord commanded me to comply with people as much as He commanded me for obligations." 2

The term 'al-Modarat' in Arabic has two possible roots: if the root of it is درأ (مهموز اللام) then it means to avoid people's evil (اتقاء شر الناس), but if the root of it is درا (غير مهموز اللام) then it means tricking a prey to hunt it. It is assumed that by complying with people's moods we will be able to eventually win their hearts.

In fact, no so-called negative comment can create a problem unless the receiver reciprocates it. It is only then that a family quarrel or a clash between two friends begins. Therefore, if one party supposedly

makes a mistake and throws an inappropriate comment at you, unless you take revenge it will die out.

Imam ‘Ali (a.s) advised his son Muhammad In Hanafiya:

> يا بُنى`! الكلام ذَكَر، و الجواب انثى، فاذا اجتمع الزوجان فلابد` من انتاج.
>
> سليم العِرض من حذر الجوابا و مَن دارى الرجال فقد اصابا
>
> وسائل الشيعة 12:220 ـ

“My dear son! A statement is a male, and a response to it is a female. When a couple is united then the production is necessary.” 3 He then poetically said:

The one who avoids a (negative) response has kept his honour

And whoever complies with people has met the right target.

1. Bihar al-Anwar, 75/197
2. Al-Kafi, 2/96
3. Wasa’il ush-Shi’a, 12/220

Family Socialisation

Friday Sermon, 12 Dec. 2008

The family is the most important of the agents of socialization. Family socialization practices have a direct impact on the couple’s relations as well as their children. Socialization with a right and appropriate family can strengthen a family bond or break it. The behavior of our children also largely depends on their family friends. Thus, it is necessary for us to know the rules of family socialization.

1) Common Faith

The first rule of family socialization is that a Muslim’s socialization is limited to people who hold the same beliefs and share the same fundamentals. This rule is repeatedly mentioned in the Quran especially in Surah al Nisa and al Ma’eda. The Almighty Allah states:

> لايتخذ المؤمنون الكافرين اولياء من دون المؤمنين.

***"Let not the believers take the disbelievers as mates* (*or supporters*) *instead of the believers."* (*3:28*)**

See also 4:39, 144, and 5:51, 57.

Thus, disconnecting ourselves from the Muslim family and living and socializing with non-Muslims is generally not permissible in Islam. However, in certain circumstances this practice is permissible.

2) Reliability

We can only socialize with families that we know well enough and are reliable and descent people. Imam 'Ali (a.s) said:

الاخوان صنفان: اخوان الثقة و اخوان المكاشرة.

"There are two types of friends: reliable friends and facial friends."

As with regards to the facial friends share you smile and sweet words with them, but it is only the reliable friends that you should socialize with.

3) Acquaintance

Before you invite any one to your house or accept any family invitation it is recommended to get to know them outside of the family environment. Only once you feel at ease with them you may open the door for a family relation. The Almighty Allah in stating the rules of family socialization says:

يا ايها الذين آمنوا لاتدخلوا بيوتا غير بيوتكم حتى تستأنسوا و تسلّموا على اهلها ذلكم خير لكم.

***"O you who believe! Do not enter houses other than your houses until you are acquainted* (*with them*) *and then greet their family* (*before entering*) *that is better for you."* (*Holy Qur'an, Surat al Noor 27*)**

4) Modesty

In family socialization it is essential to safeguard our modesty. A Muslim lady should not allow any non-Mahram man to enter her house if there is no Mahram man at home. Similarly, a Muslim man is not allowed to invite any non-Mahram lady to his house if there is no Mahram lady at home.

Segregation of men and women at the time of socialization provides a more decent and genuine family relation. A mixed social gathering unleashes the human lust. Don't ever be fooled by remarks such as 'I

trust my brother/sister', or 'don't you trust me', or 'don't be fanatical'. These are the tricks of Satan to trap people into adultery. If you don't want to lose your spouse do the right thing. Imam al- Sadiq (a.s) quoting from the holy Prophet (S) said:

فيما اخذ رسول الله (ص) البيعة على النساء: ان لايحتبين و لايقعدن مع الرجال فى الخلاء.

"Of the covenant that the Prophet (S) took from the ladies prior to their conversion to Islam was that they shall not sit inappropriately and alone with men." 1

It is also narrated from the Holy Prophet (S):

من صافح امرأة حراما جاء يوم القيامة مغلولا ثم يؤمر به الى النار، و من فاكه امرأة لايملكها حُبس بكل كلمة كلّمها فى الدنيا الف عام.

"Any man who shakes hands with a non-Mahram woman comes on the Day of Resurrection handcuffed then he will be ordered to the Fire, and any man who jokes with a woman who is not Mahram to him will be imprisoned (in Hell) for every word one thousand years." 2

1. Al-Kafi 5/519
2. Iqabul-A'maal 334

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